

## Contributions

THE CHURCH THE CONSERVATOR OF TRUTH  
No. 2

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To the church of Christ have been entrusted the oracles of God. Of these she is the heaven-appointed conservator, and they are her most precious treasure. She is the pillar and ground of the truth. On the sides of this column are inscribed the blessed lines of revealed truth—so plain, that he may run who reads; so indelible that the fiercest persecution has been unable to obliterate them; so high, that the mutilating hand of man cannot reach them. On the top of this shaft is placed the lamp of the gospel, which sends its bright beams afar among the dark places of the earth, and dispels the moral gloom that broods over our fallen humanity.

That the church may be a safe and proper receptacle for the truth she is represented as strong, and well founded, abundantly fortified, protected, and defended. "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks," She is built upon a rock, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." We are invited to go around her, and tell her towers—towers that frown defiance at all the allied hosts of men and devils that assail her. We are also to mark her bulwarks. The word says "*mark well*," that is, set your hearts—let your holy fervor glow when regarding her defences, for they guarantee the safety of her treasure, and all her denizens. Mark the eternal and unchangeable decree of God, which is the loftiest tower and mightiest bulwark of the kingdom. Mark the everlasting compact of mercy, in which the Father and the Son are the contracting parties, and the Divine Spirit the consenting party. Mark this, for it is the *Magna Charta* of all her privileges. Mark the investiture of the Messiah with regal authority as king in Zion, governor among the nations, and head over all things to the church. Mark all the ordinances as divinely-instituted means for extending and perpetuating the kingdom of God in the world. Mark all the promises and predictions of the word as so many towers of strength. Mark, too, the providence, prevenience, and perfections of God as walls and bulwarks, strong as the pillars of the universe, and impregnable as the throne of the eternal.

Here, then, may be seen the stronghold of the kingdom, the tower of David; here is the great armory, where hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men—confessors and martyrs, faithful witness-bearers and illustrious patriots—the valiant of all the ages. "Let my right hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Angels like chariots of fire, and

ministering spirits, defend and wait upon all her children.

But, it may be asked, is peculiar attachment and devotedness to a particular denomination consistent with this general love to the whole kingdom of God? Our reply is, not only are these feelings consistent but highly commendable. In the present divided state of the church, when many of her so called branches are little better than secular institutions, we must make a distinction between the pure and the imperfect. To esteem all alike were to put the heterogeneous mass—partly truth and partly error—on an equality with the pure gold from the furnace of the great refiner. It were to let the affections float indifferently without any specific object on which to place them. To love, support, and defend our own church no more than any other were simply preposterous. Besides, it does not follow that we love the members of other denominations less because we love those in our own communion more. Would the people of a state be less honored as Americans, because they labored to make their own commonwealth the most distinguished in the Union? Would the soldiers of a particular regiment on the day of battle be less interested in the success of the whole army, because they put forth every effort to win, if possible, the laurels of the fight? Why then is it, that in ecclesiastical matters alone we are branded as narrow-minded bigots, because believing the principles we profess, we endeavor to maintain, defend, and transmit them unimpaired to our children? It is not for those who occupy the high vantage-ground of soundness in the faith, divinely instituted ordinances, and purity of worship, to remove the ancient landmarks, cast aside a time honored testimony, desert the standard, and recede from their high attainments for an amalgamation with those who have the truth only in part. My brethren, it is ours, rather, to keep our elevated position, hold forth the lamp of the gospel, and invite others to come up higher.

The Brethren church has been honored of her divine Master to occupy this prominent position—this high vantage ground. I firmly believe that she stands in the advanced column of the great sacramental host, even in the forefront of the Lord's army; and it is hers to plant the standard of her mighty captain in the very citadel of the kingdom of this world, "in the face of a Parthian flight of arrows," with which ridicule, censure, and reproach, here combined to supply a thousand quivers. If there is one church more than another that should zealously guard her faith against the intrusion of false teaching it is the Brethren church. Her name, her time honored ordinances, her thrilling memories, her long-continued and faithful testimo-

ny, as well as the heroic deeds, noble contendings, and sufferings of those who have made her history echo down thro the corridors of time—

"All remind us,  
We should make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time."

May the Divine Father guide our minds and hearts that we be not led away by the siren wooings of those who would tarnish the honor of our record, and detract from the glory we yield to God. In our pastoral charges, and in our conference work, especially in the work of the General Conference for 1898, shall we not follow John's loving counsel: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby ye know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

### THE SERVICE OF PRAYER

C. H. WETHERBE

It is a delightful thought that one Christian may render most effectual service to many other Christians, all at the same time, by his earnest private prayers for them. And not only so, but one Christian, shut up at home, ill on his bed, may by his prayers render a saving service to a large number of unconverted people, for in answer to his prayers they are saved. Dr. L. A. Banks tells the following stimulating story: "A young man was saved on his dying bed. Once saved he began to think of his companions, thoughtless young fellows, just such as he was before he was led to see that he needed a Savior. He asked his pastor what he should do for them. The pastor bade him pray for them, and put their names upon a card so that he might not forget any of them. This the sick man did, and his death-chamber was hallowed by his many prayers. He died, and soon after his death the church, over which his pastor ministered, was revived. During the revival every one of the young men, so earnestly prayed for, was converted."

Who can more than begin to estimate the worth of the results of that service of prayer? Even if only one person had been converted thro that young man's prayers the service would have been of inestimable worth. And remember that the young man was confined to his bed, unable to actively engage in any religious work, yet he had the privilege of appealing to God in behalf of his ungodly companions, and he faithfully used that privilege. Notice, too, that he died